



Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District
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LOCAL AGENCY TRANSITIONS TO AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Lancaster—The Antelope Valley had one more reason to celebrate the start of 2002: on January 1st, the local air agency – formerly known as the Antelope Valley Air Pollution Control District (AVAPCD) - officially became the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (AVAQMD).

Before the first of the year, the Antelope Valley's air district had been considered a Los Angeles County "special district," a classification which made it subject to numerous regulations tailored to L.A. County departments, instead of to regulatory air agencies. The District's redesignation to an air quality management district affords the agency greater autonomy and flexibility over its own budget, enables it to implement its own personnel system, and facilitates internal housekeeping matters. Boundaries, Governing Board structure and air regulations will remain unchanged.

The redesignation marks the latest milestone in the local air district's evolution, which began with its creation in 1997. In response to local concerns about applying the same stringent air quality regulations to Antelope Valley businesses as those applied to businesses in the polluted, urban Los

Angeles basin, Senator William J. "Pete" Knight (R-Palmdale) successfully sponsored Assembly Bill (AB) 2666 in 1996. The legislation subsequently carved the AVAPCD out of the South Coast Air Quality Management District, thus creating a separate, locally-controlled air district for the Antelope Valley.

In early 2000 - in an effort to further increase the local air district's autonomy - Senator Knight introduced legislation to reclassify the AVAPCD to an AQMD. After the bill stalled at the close of the 2000 legislative session, Assemblyman George Runner (R-Lancaster) reintroduced it in February of 2001 as AB 771. The bill was subsequently signed into law by Governor Gray Davis in August of the same year.

According to AVAQMD Chairman Frank Roberts, the most critical change resulting from the District's redesignation has to do with the region's image. "Having the term 'pollution' in the

name implies that the Antelope Valley has a dirty air problem, which really isn't the case. 'Management' is more positive sounding and much more accurate," commented Roberts. The District's new name also gives the region a marketing edge, according to Roberts. "Clean air is good for business, because it encourages companies looking to relocate to consider the Valley," he observed.

To commemorate its transition to an AQMD, the District will host an Inaugural Lunch on January 15 at the Plaza Park Hotel in Lancaster (formerly the Essex House), beginning at 12:00 noon. For reservations, contact the AVAQMD at (661) 723-8070.